

New technology for RLO and the Union Cafe

Davidson College, always at the very forefront of progressive movements, is on the cutting edge once again as the school plans to introduce sweeping technological innovations to the campus.

In the fall of 2004, students will return to an entirely new set of interfaces with the college community. Instead of dealing with employees in RLO and the Union Cafe, students will now interact primarily with highly efficient robots and computers.

Naturally, the various staffs of these departments will remain employed, only now they'll be free to attend to their primary job functions rather than dealing with pesky students.

The first changes to be affected happily occur in the department of the greatest need.

With self-checkout machines handling the long lines at lunch and dinner, cafe workers will be free to pursue their primary work-place objective of restocking V8s and peach flavored Diet Snapple ice tea. An unexpected but tremendous side-effect is that the cafe workers, desperately important ambassadors to the non-college community, will have no have time to fully flush out the greater truths in their intimate, precious phone conversations.

Though some may be concerned about the inhuman, perhaps colder interactions one may have with a machine instead of the usual warm approving smile ringing up your late night queso, fears should be eased and hearts will be warmed when our new checkout bots emit, in that charming metallic voice, "Enjoy it, dude."

Administrators feel that students won't mind the new necessarily simplified menu. Said one, "They'll be happy as long as they've got their *Feeling Blue Burger* and that other popular favorite, the *Chicken Baby Blue*."

The new computer handling the especially peevish aspects of residence life work, called rLOS, will not only work to maintain the fifteen day cooling off period after student-placed work orders, but also continue to assign terrible lottery numbers to a few specifically targeted students year-after-year, and photo-shop face book pictures to the standard horrific proportions:

The highly efficient mainframe, first designed by Bechtel Corporation to organize the rebuilding of Iraq, will of course be necessarily turned off once a year on doubles lottery night.

The primary purpose and greatest effect of these technological advancements is that it will allow the human workers of RLO to perform, even practice, with appropriate joy and condemnatory zeal their main purpose at Davidson, that is to say with confidence and disdain, "No."

RLO is also looking into clip-board carrying rollers, fully equipped with the appropriate amount of tranquilizers.

Plans to replace professors with teaching robots were scratched when a group from the philosophy department met with board of trustees and convinced them that this may have already happened. A few students voiced the same opinion, but for entirely different, unexplained reasons.

The board of trustees themselves immediately rejected the idea of robots joining their ranks due to an inability to satisfactorily define the machines' views on Jesus of Nazareth.

Asked by ITS if any robots could help them in their work, the dean of admissions smirkingly replied:

"Are you kidding me? We're way ahead of the game; we've been bringing robots onto campus for years!"

Just Peace Iraq film both biased and false

Last Wednesday, the pacifist organization Just Peace presented the film "Uncovered: The Whole Truth About the Iraq War." The film is mostly composed of interviews with experts in the intelligence and foreign relations communities.



MATT BANDYK

However, it quickly becomes clear that the film has cherry-picked these "experts" solely from the radical anti-war camp. This strikingly biased and unbalanced film is not a documentary; it's a commercial for the anti-Bush position.

Space permits me to debunk only a small number of the film's many mischaracterizations and false claims. First, the film asserts again and again that Bush lied about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Apparently, Bush somehow knew that Iraq had no WMDs.

The film ignores the fact that if Bush was lying, then the Clinton administration and every major foreign intelligence service must have been lying as well, because they all agreed that Iraq still had weapons of mass destruction.

The film also says that Bush and others lied when they suggested that evidence of Iraq's WMD program could come in the form of a "mushroom cloud," because Iraq never developed the missile capability to hit the U.S. But these statements never said that the mushroom cloud would appear over the U.S.—Iraq could have struck one of our allies. After the war, inspectors in Iraq found missiles with ranges in violation of the U.N. arms regulations, as well as advanced design on missiles with

ranges of up to 1000 kilometers.

Yet even in the light of this damning evidence, some of those interviewed in the film still contend that inspectors had completely disarmed Iraq by 1998. Ironically, this argument was long ago refuted by one of the film's own sources.

Scott Ritter, who conducted the inspections in the late 90s and speaks in the film profusely, angrily wrote in an article for *The New Republic* in December of 1998 that the U.S. had bungled the inspections, as Iraq still retained biological and chemical weapons and nuclear weapons infrastructure. Ritter has now inexplicably reversed his position and claims that he somehow knows that Iraq was weapons-free.

Ritter and others in the film argue that Iraq couldn't have had any sarin nerve gas or anthrax, because both have a short shelf life and would have depleted long ago. In the case of anthrax, this is a lie. *New Scientist* writes that anthrax is such a popular weapon because "anthrax spores... have a long shelf-life: spores seized from a World War One German spy targeting allied pack animals in Norway were revived after 80 years."

The sarin gas that Iraq used during its war with Iran did have a shelf life of only a few months. But a declassified CIA report from 1996 shows that Iraq had designed a "binary" chemical weapons delivery system that stores the sarin components separately, making the shelf life "irrelevant."

Just Peace tried to make the appearance of objectivity by passing out flyers to the audience that purported to explain "how each side tried to manipulate opinion." But these flyers only talked about trivial stylistic points in the film. Why did Just Peace leave the film's weak factual basis unchallenged?

Love, not politics, defines gay marriage

By ASHISH GEORGE

Guest Columnist

The poet Philip Larkin expresses what we all know but are afraid to say. His words are a warning to us about the harm we risk inflicting on those who ask for the harmless:

In everyone there sleeps

A sense of life lived according to love.

To some it means the difference they could make

By loving others, but across most it sweeps

As all they might have done had they been loved.

That nothing cures.

Just as gay marriage has arrived as a major political issue—wonder of wonders!—the progressive sentiments of many politicians have bid us *adieu*. Indeed, John Kerry, whose lack of conviction might be troubling were it anomalous, has made the choice before us a candidate who opposes gay marriage and a candidate who opposes gay marriage a little less sincerely. (Oh, and some Nader guy too.)

Republicans, who suffer from no minor cognitive dissonance these days, believe the best way to affirm their belief in the Constitution's sanctity and their reverence for the Founding Fathers is to amend the document to fight the gains of a minority for which they have an aversion. The president contends "after more than two centuries of American jurisprudence and a millennia of human experience, a few judges and local authorities are presuming to change the most fundamental institution of civilization."

But it is Bush who is being presumptuous. The Federal Marriage Amendment he has endorsed declares "Marriage in the United States shall consist only of the union of a man and a woman." The implication of this is disturbing. Is it to be

impermissible for a private church to give gay marriage the thumbs up and conduct ceremonies accordingly?

But let's back up a moment. Why do Republicans seek an amendment at this juncture when gay marriage has hardly reached epidemic proportions? The answer is the full faith and credit clause of the Constitution, which says "Full faith and credit shall be given in each state to the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of every other state." Republicans believe that legalizing gay marriage in one state will lead to gays and lesbians flocking to that state, getting married, and returning home with a marriage that must obligatorily be recognized in their native state. But the full faith and credit clause does not necessarily cover gay marriage.

Todd Gaziano of the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, observes that the clause applies to lawsuits and court orders and that a marriage is neither. Gaziano adds that "Congress has the authority — and the states themselves have full authority — to take things outside the scope of full faith and credit clause." This explains why interracial marriage was not such a simple matter during the era of Jim Crow and why the entrenchment of gay marriage will be more a state-by-state battle than a *fait accompli*.

The primary argument against gay marriage has been that marriage is an inherently heterosexual institution since it promotes the raising of children. Stanley Kurtz, a vocal opponent of gay marriage, writes "...children are society. They are us, and they are our future." Thank you, Whitney Houston.

Marriage is about raising children. But when marriage is reduced to its potential to yield a healthy new generation, human beings are reduced to little more than instruments of breeding. Love is the alpha and omega of human relationships, and marriage is its greatest expression.

The War on Terror: taking a look at the bigger picture

So, let me get this straight. The day after 9/11, Bush asked Clarke to explore a possible link between Iraq and the suicide attackers—the same Iraq that Clinton had bombed less than a decade ago—the same Iraq that tried to kill a former president—the same Iraq that was ruled by a dictator hell-bent on destroying the United States.



MIKE GALDO

This is somehow the smoking gun that proves the whole Iraqi war is nothing more than a pet project of the neoconservative cabal that controls D.C.?

I am not going to lower myself to a full discussion of this ridiculous story. I'll leave that to classier publications like *Parade* and *The New York Times*.

I think amidst the blame game now going on in Washington it's beneficial to take a step back and take a look at some issues that are having an impact on the fundamental issues that define the War on Terror.

A serious story that does concern me is the recent shift by the terror masters to softer targets outside of the United States. It seems that al-Qaeda was smart enough to realize that directly attacking the United States would not weaken our resolve, es-

pecially after the first attack resulted in America's invasion of Afghanistan.

Instead, they have figured out that fat, weak, socialist Europe is a better target. By attacking Europe the terrorists hope to make this war a U.S. vs. the world battle. European political figures can piggyback on this issue, blaming the ruling parties of their nations for the terror attacks by connecting them with the United States. It's an easy distraction from their own internal problems and an easy way to win swing votes.

The terrorists hope to make this war a U.S. vs. the world battle

Abroad, the Islamic extremists claim their fight is against American global dominance and aggression. At home, their reasons for attacks are much different. They preach a holy cultural jihad against the West. Europe must realize that bin Laden does not only have issues with America. Pundits and politicians have been trying to steer clear of this fact, but the War on Terror is a cultural war.

The War on Terror is not a crusade. Contrary to what the Wahabbists and bin Laden claim, it is not simply Christian

against Muslim. On one side are the free societies of the world; nations that are composed of citizens with rights and duties that are not defined explicitly by any specific religious sect. The opposing side's ranks are made up of a motley group of thugs and religious fanatics—men whose chief goal is either personal gain at the expense of others (like the leaders of North Korea) or men whose desire is to impose their version of heaven on earth (like those in charge of Iran and al-Qaeda).

Western society experimented with both forms of government for centuries. It's not a religious, ethnic, or racial issue. The people in Western society are not naturally "better" in any way. The issue is what form of government works the best, and the terrorists are certainly on the losing side of that argument.

Certainly the Western governments have some responsibility for the current situation in the Middle East and in Africa. However, just because the West committed wrongs in the past does not mean that it should fold and succumb to those who want to destroy 500 years of institutional progress.

Sorry to go on this long spiel. I know I am not saying anything that most of you do not already know. I just think it's important once in awhile to step back and look at the big picture. To not only take a look at what we are fighting for, but what we are fighting against.